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642 rights of the Polish minority in Germany. It was designed
423 to prevent them from acquiring what was considered German
563 land and to deprive them of such German land as they had managed to acquire in the past. In addition to driving the Poles from German soil, this policy was also designed to eliminate Polish minorities in Eastern Germany by assimilation or expulsion, and the German word *ausrotten*—or exterminate—leaves little doubt as to the ruthlessness of the determination behind this policy. After the First World War, when certain parts of Silesia were incorporated in Poland, former German properties in industrial corporations and other valuables had a way of coming into Polish hands. When from 1939 to 1944 German armies in turn occupied a large part, and later all, of Poland, large amounts of Polish property were again transferred to Germans.

425 In one shape or another, with or without benefit of legal
563 form, this game of transferring property from the temporarily weaker to the temporarily stronger nationalities was played in large areas of Eastern Europe. When in the course of the First World War the Austro-Hungarian government collected large amounts of taxes and additional amounts of ostensibly voluntary war loans for the war efforts of Germany and Austria from the unwilling Czech, Slovakian, and Polish populations, the Austrian empire was in effect transferring important parts of the national wealth of these regions into German hands to be spent for German political and military purposes.[2] After the First World War, formerly Austrian or German mines, banks, and industrial enterprises in Czechoslovakia had a way of becoming Czechoslovakian. After 1939, when the Nazis occupied this country, Czecho-

[2] Cf. G. Gratz and R. Schuller, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-188; Wilhelm Winkler, *Die Einkommensverschiebungen in Osterreich während des Weltkrieges*, (Vienna and New Haven: Holder-Pichler-Tempsky and Yale University Press, 1930), pp. 74-78, 219-2^1; Alois Rasin, *Financial Policy of Czechoslovakia during the First Year of Its History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), pp. 7-25.

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slovakian-owned enterprises soon found their way into German hands, and the Dresdner Bank emerged as a major owner of formerly Czechoslovakian property. After Germany had lost the war in 1945, the new government of Czechoslovakia with the support of all political parties—anti-Communists as well as Communists—proceeded to expel all Sudeten Germans and to confiscate their property. Sudeten German anti-Nazis who had been loyal to the Czechoslovakian republic were nominally exempt from these provisions, but the burden of proving their loyalty was put upon their shoulders, and by 1947 the nationalistic atmosphere in the new Czechoslovakia was such that many German anti-Nazis with proven democratic records preferred to emigrate voluntarily to Germany, leaving behind the properties and savings of a lifetime. At the beginning of the year 1948, shortly before the Communists seized power in Czechoslovakia, there were perhaps 2,000,000 individuals who, in one way or another, had acquired some parts of former German property either in the Sudetenland or elsewhere in the country. These people may have found it rather difficult to resist the power and the confiscatory threats of Communism, so long as they themselves were using other people's furniture and were living in other people's houses.

Throughout the region, property rights thus became the plaything of nationalistic politics between Poles and Germans, Czechs and Austrians, Hungarians, Slovakians, and Rumanians, Serbians and Croatians. Few, if any, of the persons who participated in these confiscations considered themselves criminals. Rather they persuaded themselves that they were patriots. They had perhaps suffered themselves during the preceding periods of war or foreign occupation, and this may have seemed to them the only opportunity for getting some sort of reparation. No rationalization, however, could change the ultimate result: during the last thirty years in Eastern Europe, the ownership of

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425 563 property, the right to travel, and the right to work in desirable occupations, have been dependent not upon a man's diligence, honesty, or thrift, but upon the accident of his affiliations with the group temporarily in power. A man's property and freedom thus came to depend upon the official estimation of his "political reliability" or loyalty, which was defined for him by a rapidly changing sequence of politicians and political regimes. Many of the men who practiced these policies of confiscation and repression considered themselves anti-Communists, or professed themselves as such. Yet in their disregard for property rights and civil liberties they did much to pave the way for Communism.

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185 668 Perhaps it has been memories of the stagnation under the old empires and the conflict and repressions of the following eras of nationalism that have turned many to visions of a safer, broader, and more generous life under an Eastern European federation.

In the minds of those who accepted this vision, a federation of Eastern European states would offer its peoples military security against invasion by outsiders. It would insure economic prosperity, provide a more stable distribution of economic welfare, safeguard property, provide broader opportunities for all, reward work, thrift, and enterprise, and by all these means serve to insure broad and rapid economic growth. In regard to politics, it would safeguard civil liberties. It would guarantee nondiscriminatory treatment to all peoples and minorities and free mobility to individuals throughout the region. It would assure to both individuals and peoples throughout Eastern Europe respect for their diverse habits and traditions, so that none of them would be forced to change their respective customs, work habits, and social institutions more rapidly or more radically than they might